
If you believe you are eligible to vote and encounter difficulty registering, please contact the Rhode Island Election Division, at:

Office of the Secretary of State
State House
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 222-2340 (voice)
(401) 222-2311 (TDD)
www.elections.state.ri.us

If the Rhode Island Election Division is unable to help you, or to report a problem, contact:

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Voting Section, Rm 7254 - NWB
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 307-2767 (voice)
(800) 253-3931 (toll-free)
(202) 307-3961 (fax)
www.usdoj.gov/crt

This pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only, as an aid to further inquiry. The laws in many states are revised frequently, and may have changed since this pamphlet was issued. It is your responsibility to determine whether you are lawfully eligible to vote, and criminal penalties can result from voting when ineligible or making false statements on a registration form.

Issued December, 2000

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division



Restoring Your Right to Vote



The right to vote is an important civil right in a democracy as well as a civic responsibility, and yet many persons who have been convicted of a crime do not know whether they are eligible to vote. For both federal and state elections, the right to vote is controlled by the law of the state in which you live. Some states restrict the right to vote for persons who have been convicted of a crime. This pamphlet is intended to help you determine whether you are eligible to vote in the state in which you live, and if so, what steps you must take to be permitted to vote.

What law governs whether my felony conviction limits my right to vote?

The impact of a criminal conviction on the right to vote varies widely from state to state. Whether you can vote after being convicted of a crime is determined by the state in which you live, not the state in which you were convicted.

Can I vote while I'm incarcerated in Rhode Island?

If you are a resident of Rhode Island, you cannot vote while you are under incarcerated as a result of a felony conviction. If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in Rhode Island, you may be able to vote an absentee ballot for your home state. You need to consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

I have been released from incarceration. How do I restore my right to vote?

In Rhode Island, the right to vote is automatically restored upon satisfactory completion of imprisonment, probation, and parole. Upon final discharge of all aspects of your sentence, your right to vote is automatically restored, and you can register to vote.

What if my conviction was for a federal crime?

Rhode Island applies the same rules whether you were convicted of a federal or state crime.

What if I was convicted in another state?

The same rules apply for Rhode Island voters even if the conviction occurred in another state.

What happens if I move to another state?

If you move to another state, your right to vote will be controlled by the laws of that state.

What are Rhode Island's other voter registration requirements?

To vote in Rhode Island, you must be a U.S. citizen, have lived in your Rhode Island town or city for at least 30 days before the next election, and be at least 18 by the date of the next election.

When do I need to register to vote?

Registration is available year-round in Rhode Island. However, in order to vote in an election, you must be registered at least 30 days before that election.

Where do I go to register?

Registration is available at many places in Rhode Island, including:

- the State Board of Elections office
- local boards of canvassers
- the Division of Motor Vehicles
- Armed Forces recruitment centers
- many public service agencies